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Expanded FBI Role Is Backed

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The Senate intelligence committee plans to recommend that the FBI take over some domestic intelligence functions that have been performed by the Central Intelligence Agency, according to Sen. Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.).

Mondale, chairman of the domestic intelligence subcommittee, said the proposal would permit the FBI to continue a "broad range" of domestic intelligence and counterintelligence activities. Mondale refused to identify the precise CIA activities to be transformed, but a committee source said they included some elements of Operation CHAOS, the CIA program that began in 1967 to collect information on foreign contacts of American dissidents.

Mondale made his statements at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing called to study a resolution, drafted by the Government Operations Committee, to give a new intelligence committee exclusive jurisdiction over the FBI's intelligence operations.

The Judiciary Committee currently has that authority and its members do not want to give it up.

Mondale said that the continuing FBI role in domestic intelligence made it reasonable for both the Judiciary Committee and the new committee to oversee the FBI.

Mondale said that past abuses by the FBI stemmed "not from law enforcement operations but from intelligence activities . . . Some people have exaggerated notions of what is dangerous."

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The Senate intelligence committee's recommendation to continue and expand the FBI's intelligence role was made, Mondale said, after recommending "a substantial program is needed and the FBI is as good as any other agency" to handle it.

"A little duplication in oversight is useful if not necessary," Mondale said, "in these areas where democracy could be destroyed."

Attorney General Edward H. Levi and FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley appeared before the Judiciary Committee to restate their earlier position that, as Levi put it, "sensible oversight ought to look at the bureau as a whole . . . and as an integral part of the Justice Department."

The Attorney General said he thought FBI oversight "ought to be in one committee."

Levi said, "It would be a mistake to peel off foreign and domestic intelligence" from the FBI and have one committee "deal with it separately."

Kelley said he had had no objection to reporting to more than one committee though he feared "extending ourselves" and facing "conflicting directives as to what should be done."

Jurisdiction problems involving the new intelligence committee also were discussed at a hearing of the Armed Services Committee, which stands to lose its jurisdiction over the CIA the National Security Agency and national intelligence functions of the military services.

At a closed-door session, members voiced conflicting views and reached no conclusion. Another meeting on the issue was set for Tuesday.

The Foreign Relations Committee, which stands to lose its jurisdiction over the State Department's Intelligence and Research Division, met on the matter behind closed doors Wednesday and it, too, planned to discuss the subject again next week.